

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02804 01 OF 02 181827Z

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 2804

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TAGS: PFOR, RH, ZA

SUBJ: CHONA COMMENTS ON FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS MEETING

REF: STATE 254432, 255421; LUSAKA 2793

SUMMARY: CHONA COMMENTS ON FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS MEETING TO THE EFFECT THAT BRITISH MUST ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SITUATION BY HAVING CROSLAND OPEN GENEVA MEETING AND APPOINT RESIDENT COMMISSIONER IN SALISBURY DURING INTERIM PERIOD WHO WOULD EXERCISE RESIDUAL POWERS PERHAPS WITH ADVICE OF COUNCIL OF STATE. SMITH'S CLAIM OF BOTH MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND POLICE IS UNACCEPTABLE BUT COMPROMISE IS POSSIBLE. BECAUSE OF ITS DANGERS, INTERIM PERIOD SHOULD BE SHORTENED. SITHOLE SHOULD BE INVITED AND MUGABE WOULD ATTEND. THE PRESIDENTS WOULD SUPPORT ANY GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER DECIDED ON AT GENEVA. FRONTLINE STATES WOULD SEND OBSERVERS TO GENEVA. ON NAMIBIA CLEAR COMMITMENT ON RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS SHOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESPONSES TO SEVEN POINTS RAISED BY SWAPO (LUSAKA 2277) IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THEIR AGREEMENT TO ATTEND CONFERENCE. PRESIDENTS WORKED SMOOTHLY IN REACHING AGREEMENT AND FELT REAL MOVEMENT WAS BEING MADE TOWARDS SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. I BELIEVE PRESIDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN DETAILS AND DECISION TO SEND OBSERVERS TO GENEVA INDICATES PROGRESS TOWARDS SHOULDERING GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCCESS

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SECRET

PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02804 01 OF 02 181827Z

OF GENEVA AND SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

1. CHONA AND KASANDA REVIEWED WITH ME AT LENGTH YESTERDAY'S MEETING OF THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS, FOLLOWING WHAT I GATHER TO HAVE BEEN A RATHER CONTENTIOUS SESSION WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER MILES AND ADVISER DENIS GRENNAN. PRES KAUNDA HIMSELF LEFT THE CITY EARLY THIS MORNING AND IS UP COUNTRY.

2. THEY STARTED OFF WITH SOME GENERAL COMMENTS, COMMUNICATING THEIR OPTIMISM AS A RESULT OF THE SMOOTH AND POSITIVE SESSION WHICH THE FOUR PRESIDENTS HAD. THEY SAID THEY COULD SEE A TRANSCONTINENTAL ZONE OF PEACE BEING FORMED WITH POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS TO EXTERNAL POWERS. THE FRONTLINE STATES HAVE NO PERMANENT ENEMIES. THIS IS SPECIFICALLY TRUE OF MOZAMBIQUE WHICH IS TAKING A MUCH MORE COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE US. THE SECRETARY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS GROWING COOPERATION BECAUSE HIS INITIATIVE FORCED THE PRESIDENTS TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO GET TOGETHER ON SHORT NOTICE AND COORDINATE THEIR VIEWS QUICKLY TO DEVELOPMENTS. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THEY SAID THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY BETWEEN ANGOLA AND THE USSR WOULD INHIBIT THIS PROCESS--RATHER THEY SAID, THE PROCESS WOULD MAKE THE AGREEMENT LESS RELEVANT. THEY SAID SUCH AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED WITH EGYPT BEFORE AND WE SAW HOW LONG THAT LASTED.

3. THEY THEN REVIEWED THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETINGS. FIRST, WITH REGARD TO THE BRITISH ROLE: THE BRITISH MUST ASSUME THEIR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPING PROCESS OR THE CONFERENCE WILL FAIL. SPECIFICALLY THEY SUGGESTED THAT BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND OPEN THE CONFERENCE AND AGREE TO DEVOTE WHATEVER TIME IS NECESSARY TO ITS SUCCESS. IVOR RICHARD COULD ACTUALLY CHAIR THE CONFERENCE BUT CROSLAND SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR VISITS AND QUICK DECISIONS. THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR EITHER THE US OR BRITAIN TO HOLD BACK. THERE MUST BE A FULL COMMITMENT AND THEY SUGGESTED THAT CROSLAND FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE SECRETARY'S GREAT MOBILITY

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SECRET

PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02804 01 OF 02 181827Z

AND HIS HABIT OF DEALING WITH IMPORTANT MATTERS HIMSELF PERSONALLY AND ON THE SPOT. AS FAR AS THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WAS CONCERNED, BRITAIN HAD DELEGATED CERTAIN POWERS TO RHODESIA DURING THE 20'S AND SINCE. THESE POWERS MUST BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE PRESENT MINORITY GOVT TO THE MAJORITY. THE RESIDUAL POWERS WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TRANSFERRED REMAINED WITH THE BRITISH AND MUST BE ACCEPTED BY THEM. THEY SHOULD BE EXERCISED

BY A BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER IN SALISBURY. IF THE BRITISH INSISTED ON RETAINING THE IDEA OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, IT COULD REMAIN WITH REDUCED POWERS IN AN ADVISORY ROLE TO THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER. THE SMALLER THE COUNCIL OF STATE, THE BETTER. CHONA SAID MILES AND GRENNAN HAD TRIED TO ARGUE THAT RHODESIA WAS A SPECIAL CASE, DIFFERENT FROM KENYA, ZAMBIA, TANZANIA, ETC. THE PRESIDENTS REJECTED THIS IDEA. THE RESIDUAL POWERS REMAIN WITH THE BRITISH AND CANNOT BE AVOIDED. CHONA SAID THAT THIS PROPOSAL WAS MUCH LIKE ONE ADVANCED BY THE CONSERVATIVES EARLIER IN THE DECADE AND THAT THE PRESIDENTS WOULD HELP CONVINCE THE CONSERVATIVES PARTY IN BRITAIN TO AGREE TO BRITISH ACCEPTANCE OF AUTHORITY. THEY WERE NOT SPEAKING OF TROOPS--SIMPLY THE RECOGNITION OF BRITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH IN ANY CASE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY IT WHEN IT ASKED, IN THE UN, FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS AS IT WILL HAVE TO ASK FOR THEIR TERMINATION.

4. RESERVATION OF MINISTERS TO RHODESIAN WHITES AND TRANSITIONAL PERIOD: CHONA SAID SMITH COULD NOT CLAIM DEFENSE AND POLICE FOR RHODESIAN WHITES BUT ONLY REQUEST THEM. THERE HAD BEEN NO PREVIOUS AGREEMENT TO THIS CLAIM. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ROOM FOR COMPROMISE ON THIS ISSUE. HERE THE QUESTION OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER (DEPT 240095; LUSAKA 2699 AND 2794) WAS REVIEWED. CHONA FULLY UNDERSTANDS THAT NEITHER THE SECRETARY NOR ANYONE ELSE CLAIMED THAT THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL AS ENUNCIATED BY SMITH HAD BEEN AGREED TO BEFOREHAND BY THE AFRICANS. CHONA AND KASANDA NOTED THAT WE WERE ONLY TALKING ABOUT A PERIOD OF PROBABLY 18 MONTHS AND THEREFORE SMITH COULD NOT AFFORD TO ANTAGONIZE THE LONG TERM INTERESTS OF THE WHITES IN
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SECRET

PAGE 04 LUSAKA 02804 01 OF 02 181827Z

RHODESIA FOR SHORT TERM RETENTION OF POWER. SMITH AND THE OTHER HARD-LINERS, THEYHNAID, WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE AROUND ANYWAY WHEN INDEPENDENCE CAME. I SAID THAT THE SECRETARY HAS ALSO CALLED ATTENTION TO THE SHORT DURATION PERIOD. HE BELIEVES THAT IT IMPOSES OBLIGATIONS ON BOTH SIDES TO ACCEPT COMPROMISE AND LIMIT THEIR DEMANDS. WITH

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02804 02 OF 02 181856Z

41

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 2804

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REGARD TO THE LENGTH OF THE INTERIM PERIOD, CHONA SUGGESTED THAT THE US GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD IS A PARTICULARLY DELICATE AND DIFFICULT TIME, AS THE EXPERIENCE WITH THE PORTUGUESE COLONIES SHOWED SO CLEARLY. A LONG, DRAWN-OUT PERIOD COULD PRESENT MANY DANGERS. ONCE AGREEMENT IS ACHIEVED AT THE CONFERENCE, THEREFORE, WE SHOULD AIM AT A SHORT PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

4. THE SITHOLE INVITATION: CHONA SAID THE PRESIDENTS WERE POINTING OUT TO THE BRITISH THE DANGER OF EXCLUDING A MAN WHO COULD RETURN TO RHODESIA AND DEMONSTRATE HE STILL HAD SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT. AS FAR AS MUGABE WAS CONCERNED, THE PRESIDENTS WERE CONVINCED HE WILL GO TO THE MEETING EVEN IF SITHOLE ATTENDS. CHONA EMPHATICALLY REPEATED THE ASSURANCE NYERERE HAD GIVEN GRENNAN, THAT THE PRESIDENTS WERE AGREED THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT ANY GOVT AT GENEVA WHICH BRINGS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVE TRANSFER OF POWER FROM THE PRESENT GOVT TO A MAJORITY GOVT WHETHER MUGABE OR SITHOLE, OR ANYONE ELSE, IS THERE OR NOT.

5. REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA: THE PRESIDENTS DECIDED THEY WILL ALL SEND OBSERVERS. THESE OBSERVERS EXPECT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE US REPRESENTATIVE THERE. LATER, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, CHONA SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD GO. HE ADDED EMPHATICALLY THAT SCHAUFELLE MUST BE THERE FROM THE US.

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02804 02 OF 02 181856Z

HE AND KAUANDA SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE WORK TOGETHER IN GENEVA. ONLY THREE THINGS COULD CAUSE THE CONFERENCE

TO FAIL AND WOULD PERMIT SMITH TO BACK OUT OF HIS COMMITMENT: DISUNITY AMONG THE NATIONALISTS; FAILURE OF THE BRITISH TO ACCEPT THEIR FULL RESPONSIBILITIES; OR THE INABILITY OF THE US, IN COOPERATION WITH THE FOUR PRESIDENTS, TO GUIDE THE MEETING IN A DIRECTION WHICH WOULD DENY SMITH AN EXCUSE FOR BACKING OUT. I SAID THAT THE SECRETARY RECOGNIZED OUR CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES TO SEE THIS MATTER THROUGH BUT THAT OUR ABILITY TO CARRY THIS OUT DEPENDED ON THE SPIRIT OF RESTRAINT AND COOPERATION ON ALL SIDES. CONSTANTLY ESCALATING DEMANDS FROM THE NATIONALISTS COULD DESTROY THIS ABILITY BY PROVIDING SMITH WITH THE EXCUSE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF A REASONABLE SOLUTION. CHONA SAID HE RECOGNIZED THIS POINT AND FULLY INTENDED TO WORK WITH US TO ENSURE THAT A COOPERATIVE AND MODERATE ATTITUDE IS MAINTAINED AT THE CONFERENCE.

6. ON NAMIBIA: CHONA REFERRED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO THE VERY HELPFUL AND POSITIVE LETTERS ON THIS SUBJECT FROM THE SECRETARY. THE PRESIDENTS DISCUSSED NAMIBIA AND RECOGNIZED THAT CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. THE UN WOULD CONVENE THE CONFERENCE AND PARTICIPATE IN IT; SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE THERE AS WELL AS SWAPO. THESE WERE ALL VERY POSITIVE STEPS. THREE OBSTACLES REMAINED: THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN PARTICIPATION. THIS SEEMED CLARIFIED BY THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE SECRETARY'S LAST LETTER SAYING THAT THE WINDHOEK CONFERENCE DELEGATION WOULD BE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE. THERE WERE TWO MATTERS, HOWEVER, WHICH STILL NEEDED SOME CLARIFICATION: RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND MILITARY WITHDRAWAL. IF THE SECRETARY COULD GIVE A FIRMER ASSURANCE BEYOND THE STATEMENT IN HIS LETTER THAT HE "BELIEVED" IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A SUBSTANTIAL RELEASE OF PRISONERS, THEN THIS MATTER COULD BE RESOLVED. SIMILARLY, IF HE COULD ASSURE THE PRESIDENTS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD AGREED TO EVENTUAL WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY FORCES BUT NEEDED TO DISCUSS THE TIMING AND ARRANGEMENTS, THEN THIS MATTER COULD BE TAKEN CARE OF. IN SUM, THE PRESIDENTS FELT THAT A CLEAR RESPONSE WAS NEEDED TO EACH OF THE POINTS RAISED BY SWAPO (KAUNDA LETTER OF OCT
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SECRET

PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02804 02 OF 02 181856Z

17, LUSAKA 2796). CHONA SAID THE PRESIDENTS FEEL EACH OF THE SWAPO DEMANDS MUST HAVE A POSITIVE AND FIRM ANSWER EVEN IF WE ARE NOT ABLE TO SATISFY SWAPO COMPLETELY ON EACH ONE. WITH SUCH A REPLY, THE PRESIDENTS WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENCOURAGE SWAPO TO AGREE TO THE CONFERENCE. CHONA SAID THAT THE PRESIDENTS AGREED WITH THE SECRETARY THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO AVOID THE KIND OF SITUATION WHICH DEVELOPED OUT OF THE SMITH ANNOUNCEMENT. THE MATTER OF HOW AN AGREEMENT WAS MADE PUBLIC WAS VERY IMPORTANT. IN RETROSPECT, IT

HAD BEEN A MISTAKE TO PERMIT THE AGREEMENT ON ZIMBABWE TO BE ANNOUNCED BY SMITH. IN NAMIBIA IS WAS IMPORTANT THAT GREAT CARE BE EXERCISED IN THIS AND THAT EITHER "YOU" MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OR IT BE MADE SIMULTANEOUSLY BY ALL PARTIES. FINALLY, CHONA EXPRESSED THE PRESIDENTS HOPE THAT THE MEETING COULD BE CONVENED DURING 1976 TO PRESERVE THE HOPE OF INDEPENDENCE BEFORE THE END OF 1977.

7. IN ALL THE DISCUSSIONS, CHONA SAID, THERE WAS A FEELING THAT THE PRESIDENTS WERE WORKING SMOOTHLY AND THAT REAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS ULTIMATE SOLUTIONS WAS BEING MADE. HE ASKED THAT WE STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM AS THE CONFERENCE DATE NEARS.

8. COMMENT: THIS MEETING OF THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A CLEAR STEP FORWARD IN TERMS OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. UP TO THIS POINT KAUNDA IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO CAST IT AS A BRITISH EFFORT FOR WHICH THEY ARE EXCLUSIVELY RESPONSIBLE, AND HE HAS KEPT HIMSELF AT A DISTANCE FROM IT. THE WILLINGNESS OF THE PRESIDENTS TO ENGAGE IN THE DETAILS OF CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERIM GOVT, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEIR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA AS OBSERVERS, INDICATES FOR THE FIRST TIME A WILLINGNESS TO SHOULDER SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE. THEIR STATEMENT, WHICH PROBABLY ORIGINATES WITH NYERERE, THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT A GENUINE TRANSFER OF POWER MAY NOT BE A HARD AND FAST COMMITMENT BUT IT IS MORE THAN HAS BEEN MADE BEFORE. SIMILARLY, THEIR DISCUSSION OF NAMIBIA APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN
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PAGE 04 LUSAKA 02804 02 OF 02 181856Z

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9. REQUEST DEPT PASS DAR, MAPUTO, GABORONE, PRETORIA AND LONDON. LOW

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